

Serial No. 10/767,678
Atty. Doc. No. 2002P10618US

REMARKS

Applicants have amended claims 2, 4, 7, 8, 15, 16 and 17, and cancelled claims 1, 5, 6, and 11-14. After entry of such amendments, claims 2-4, 7-10, and 15-20 are pending and presented for examination. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter. Claim 3 stands allowed, and the Examiner has indicated that claims 2, 4, 7-10 and 15-20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants note claim 1 is the base claim for claims 2, 4, 7-10 and 17-20, and that rewriting all such objected to claims only with the limitations of the base claim and any respective intervening claims would result in a relatively high number of independent claims. Accordingly, as to claims 2, 4, 7 and 8, Applicants have chosen to have these depend from allowed claim 3, rather than from claim 1 (directly or indirectly). Claim 7 also includes the limitation of claim 5, from which it depended. In that claim 3 is allowed, it is believed that this approach will be acceptable to the Patent Office. As is apparent from the above amendments, this shift in dependency, to an allowed claim, also affects claims 9, 10 and 18-20.

Also, Applicants have chosen to depend method allowable method claim 16 from allowable method claim 15, which includes limitations of claims 12 and 14, rather than directly from claim 12. In that claim 15 was indicated to be allowable subject to amendment to include all limitations through to its base claim, as is now provided, it is believed that this approach will be acceptable to the Patent Office.

Objected to claim 17 has been rewritten to include all limitations of its base claim 1 and intervening claim 2. This brings the number of independent claims now pending to three.

Applicants believe such amendments bring claims 2-4, 7-10, and 15-20 into condition for allowance. As noted above, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in view of the foregoing amendments is respectfully requested. If any matter remains which may be resolved by a telephone call, the undersigned will appreciate receipt of such call toward more timely and more efficient advancement of this application to allowance.

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Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that the application with the claims as amended herein timely pass to allowance. Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this paper. The commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees due in connection with this paper, or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2179.

Respectfully submitted,

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